

## About CERT



### Introduction to the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services will not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will prevent people from accessing emergency services they have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. People will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate life saving and life sustaining needs.

One also expects that under these kinds of conditions, family members, fellow employees, and neighbors will spontaneously try to help each other. If we can predict that emergency services will not meet immediate needs following a major disaster, especially if there is no warning as in an earthquake, and people will spontaneously volunteer, what can government do to prepare citizens for this eventuality?

First, present citizens the facts about what to expect following a major disaster in terms of immediate services. Second, give the message about their responsibility for mitigation and preparedness. Third, train them in needed life saving skills with emphasis on decision making skills, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. Fourth, organize teams so that they are an extension of first responder services offering immediate help to victims until professional services arrive.

The CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it. This individual will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. Additionally, if a community wants to supplement its response capability after a disaster, civilians can be recruited and trained as neighborhood, business, and government teams that, in essence, will be auxiliary responders. These groups can provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous volunteers who have not had the training, and collect disaster intelligence that will assist professional responders with prioritization and allocation of resources following a disaster. Since 1993 when this training was made available nationally by FEMA, communities in 28 States and Puerto Rico have conducted CERT training.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**What is a CERT member?** A CERT member is a person who is trained to prepare for and respond after a disaster in their neighborhood. A group of ten or more members of a neighborhood, apartment complex, business or similar residential area comprise a team. Persons not affiliated with a team may serve as individuals.

**Who may join a CERT?** Anyone who is interested in helping his or her neighborhood prepare for a disaster and provide assistance afterward. Team training is preferred; however, persons may be trained even if they are not affiliated with a team.

**Where can I get more information about the CERT program?** For information on the national CERT program, go to the CERT Web site [www.citizencorps.gov/cert](http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert). For information about the Woodburn Area CERT program please contact Nita Marr at Woodburn Police Department at (503) 982-2359 or e-mail to: [nita.marr@ci.woodburn.or.us](mailto:nita.marr@ci.woodburn.or.us).

# Training- What Can I Expect?"



CERT provides instruction and training for a variety of response capabilities. The skills learned in CERT training are applicable to a host of emergency situations, thus better preparing our community to recover from a disaster. Interested participants can expect to learn the following response functions:

**Disaster Preparedness:** CERT instructs team members how to prepare themselves and their neighborhoods for the various hazards that may occur.

**Team Organization and Disaster Psychology:** CERT addresses organizational and management principles necessary for a CERT to operate successfully, and critical incident stress for victims as well as workers.

**Medical Operations:** CERT team members will learn how to conduct triage, establish medical treatment areas, and provide basic first aid for victims.

**Damage Assessment:** Team members will learn how to rapidly assess damage employing a standardized format used throughout the county.

**Terrorism Awareness:** Team members will learn the definition of terrorism and terrorist goals, the weapons that are used, and the indicators of a terrorist attack.

**Fire Suppression:** Team members will learn how to use extinguishers and other equipment to suppress small fires.

**Light Search and Rescue:** Team members will learn light search and rescue planning, techniques, and rescuer safety.

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, the CERT Program provides each student with their own personal protection equipment cache that includes a CERT carry bag, safety vest, gloves, goggles, flashlight, medical first aid kit, and more.

The entire CERT training course is 20 hours, broken up into eight sessions. Classes are offered at Woodburn Police Department, 1060 Mount Hood Avenue, Woodburn, Oregon. In order to complete certification, you **MUST** attend all sessions! If you plan to enroll, please make certain your schedule allows attendance for all eight sessions of the training. Class size is limited to 20 students.